

Hockey Sticks it to Violence

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"THE RINK IS A GREAT PLACE TO TEACH POSITIVE BEHAVIOR. INSTEAD OF GETTING COUNSELING IN AN OFFICE, THE KIDS LEARN PROBLEM SOLVING ON ICE. IF THERE'S VIOLENCE, WE CALL A PENALTY, AND OUR CRISIS COUNSELOR HELPS THEM WORK OUT THEIR AGGRESSION ON THE SPOT."

BILL RANFORD, FORMER EDMONTON OILER GOALTENDER

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Bill Ranford—former Edmonton Oilers goaltender and NHL All-Star—has seen his share of on-ice violence. Standing between the goal posts, he's witnessed brutal body checks, spearing, tripping, elbowing and fighting. So, why is he involved in a program that couples the sport of hockey with anger management?

In a recent interview with Focus, Bill talked about his "life skills on ice" program, *Stick It to Violence*. The program—founded by Bill, a 14 year veteran of the NHL, and his wife Kelly—helps at-risk children learn problem solving skills and curb their aggression.

Focus: What's the rationale of combining hockey with anger management?

Bill: The rink is a great place to teach positive behavior. Instead of getting counseling in an office, the kids learn problem solving on ice. If there's violence, we call a penalty, and our crisis counselor helps them work out their aggression on the spot. Hockey can bring out anger, so the program is a



As Oiler Goaltender, Bill Ranford saw it all.

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great way to teach youth to resolve conflict right away.

Hockey also puts kids on an even playing field. Most of the youth have never skated in their lives. The dominant kids on the street are often humbled when they put on skates. Each kid learns what it means to be a team player.

The boys and girls spend one afternoon on the ice and one afternoon off the ice working on problem solving techniques. The process brings emotions and feelings to the surface. These feelings are difficult to bring out in an office setting.

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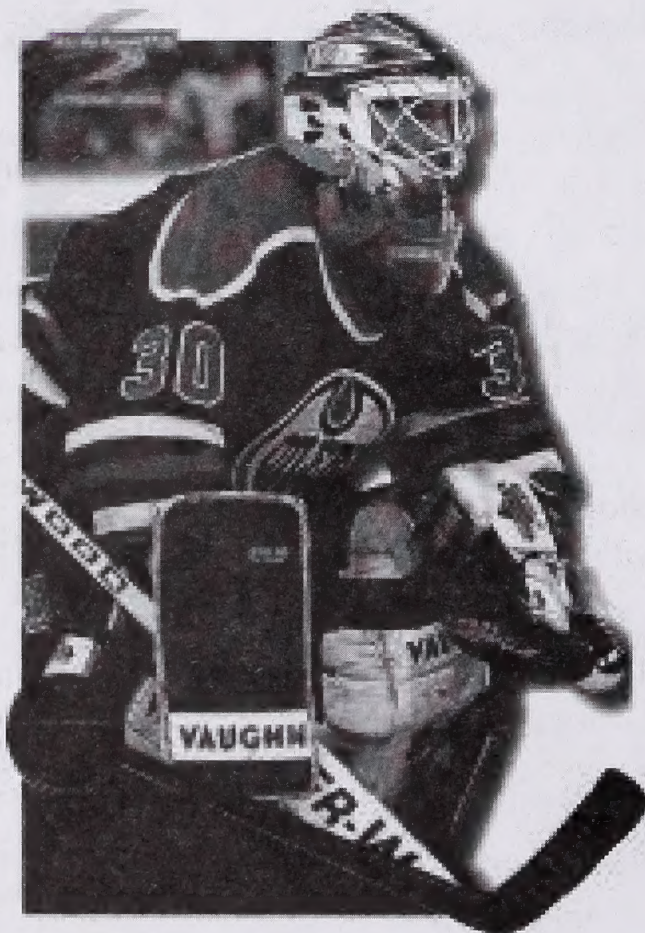
Through the program, the kids work with positive role models and they set goals each week. It's a different way to teach life skills.

Focus: How did the program start?

Bill: The program was piloted in Bellingham [Washington] five years ago. But the cost for ice time and insurance in the United States was out of this world! So we set up the program in New Westminster [British Columbia], where I now live, as part of the school board curriculum. Because schools get a reduced rate for ice time, the program is more affordable.

Focus: Which schools are involved in the program?

Bill: Right now the program is run through the Royal City Alternate School in New Westminster. It's one of the many alternate schools across Canada for boys and girls aged 13 to 15 who can't adapt to a mainstream high school setting.



Kelly, a teacher at Royal City, saw a huge need for a program that took counseling beyond the walls of the classroom. *Stick It To Violence* was a big step toward providing progressive alternate services to her students. The youth hockey program is run as an extra-curricular course.

Focus: What are your plans for the future?

Bill: Now that the pilot project has been completed, and we know we have a good program, we're looking at attracting other schools in Canada. We're willing to work with any schools—mainstream or alternate—as long as they have a resident counselor. A counselor is key to our program.

Focus: Who else helps with your program?

Bill: We get a lot of support from the National Hockey League Players Association (NHLPA). Through the NHLPA Goals and Dreams program, we've received 60 sets of hockey equipment that outfit a person from head to toe.

We also get funding through the Westcoast Kids Golf Tournament charity. Part of the tournament proceeds help take care of our annual operating expenses.

Focus: Do you ever put on the skates and join the kids?

Bill: I'm on the ice with them almost every week. We make sure they have as many positive role models as possible. We have lots of volunteers and coaches who make this program a success. Whenever we keep a kid off the street and out of trouble, we feel we've won!

As part of our continuing resiliency theme, Focus is pleased to present this article on a successful AADAC initiative.

EVERYDAY HEROES

An encouraging word, glance or a long-term relationship can have a huge influence on a teen. Most adults never know that their words and actions make a difference to young people.

"MOST OF THE ADULTS AT THE AWARDS CEREMONY DON'T THINK THEY'D DONE ANYTHING SPECIAL. THEY WERE SURPRISED AND HONORED TO BE NOMINATED."

LINDA BOKSTEYN, LOCAL CAMPAIGN ORGANIZER AND COMMUNITY WORKER FOR THE CITY OF MEDICINE HAT



Marj Gilchrist would never describe herself as a hero. But to 17 year old Jenna Maser, she's a champion who's changed Jenna's life.

Jenna explains, "Marj has shown me, without knowing, that anybody can bounce back from tragedy. Her resolve to recover from an accident that left her with a brain injury had a profound effect on me. I've learned to be stronger and more determined."

That's why Jenna nominated Marj for an award ceremony hosted by the Medicine Hat Resiliency Committee. Titled the Resiliency Postcard Campaign, the awards night recognizes adults who've had a positive impact in the lives of youth.

Adults surprised and honoured

"Adults never know the difference they make," says Linda Boksteyn, local campaign organizer and Community Worker for the City of Medicine Hat. In fact, she adds, "Most of the adults at the awards ceremony didn't think they'd done anything special. They were surprised and honored to be nominated."

Last fall, the Resiliency Committee invited students from grades seven and 12 to write on a postcard about an adult who had impacted their lives. The person had to be someone other than their parents.

"We recognize that parents have the most influence on their children, but we wanted many dif-

"My school's janitor is friendly and is an awesome influence to the younger generation. He makes me want to get up in the morning and go to school. He is always there for me when I need to talk or solve a problem."

-Brandy Willier

"I tell my grandpa whatever I tell him in her heart. She's like I'm wanted. She's my best friends in the world. Although she is getting old every day, I want to know that I love her."

ferent adults to realize how much they can affect kids," says Linda.

The postcards flooded in. More than 600 adolescents from the Medicine Hat area filled out the cards. The youth wrote about neighbors, coaches, teachers, aunts, older siblings, lifeguards and janitors. Some of their stories were about a one-time encounter. Others were about long-term relationships.

Program adaptable to meet unique needs

The Postcard Campaign is a province-wide program of the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Committee (AADAC) to increase resilience in Alberta's youth. Each community can adapt the AADAC resources to meet their unique needs. In Medicine Hat, the committee tailored the campaign with a special awards evening. From the hundreds of nominations, 20 were chosen to receive awards at the celebration night.

"The awards ceremony was a big success. Students were invited to read their postcards, and adults could say a few words too, if they wanted. There were lots of hugs, tears, caring and sharing," explains Linda.

With support youth can bounce back

The annual Postcard Campaign is just one of the many activities used by the Medicine Hat committee to encourage resiliency—the ability to rise above difficult life circumstances. "We want every kid to have an adult who cares about them. Research shows most youth can bounce back from adversity if they have an adult who is supportive," says Linda.

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whole world.
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let her
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Tara Marchand

"My teacher helped me with my problems. Thanks to him, I have been good with my studying. He had a saying, 'Eagles fly high and chickens peck the dirt.' He never gave up on helping one of his students."
-Natasha Andres

Linda helps with the delivery of resiliency as part of the school curriculum. "It's a bit of a unique spin. We're city employees, yet we don't work from municipal offices. We're located right in the schools." She adds, "By working in the schools, we get a better idea of problems in the community. The school gives us referrals to work with families. We're right there in the thick of things."

Linda teaches adolescents that they can learn to solve problems, have good relationships, be responsible for their actions and find humor in their troubles. "We have a 'stretchy' guy on a pencil to teach kids that with the right factors, we bounce back. We all get stressed and stretched, but if we have someone in our lives, we can bounce back," says Linda.

- Members of the
Medicine Hat Resiliency Committee**
- Miywasin Society
 - City of Medicine Hat
 - Medicine Hat Youth Justice Committee
 - Medicine Hat John Howard Society
 - School Division 76
 - Prairie Rose School Division
 - Alberta Mental Health Board
 - McMan Youth Services
 - Youth Wellness Coordinator
 - Big Brothers/Big Sisters
 - Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)
 - Ralston Military Family Resource Centre
 - Canadian Mental Health Association
 - Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Committee (AADAC)
 - Medicine Hat College
 - Medicine Hat College Practicum Students
 - Medicine Hat Family Services

notes... NEWS

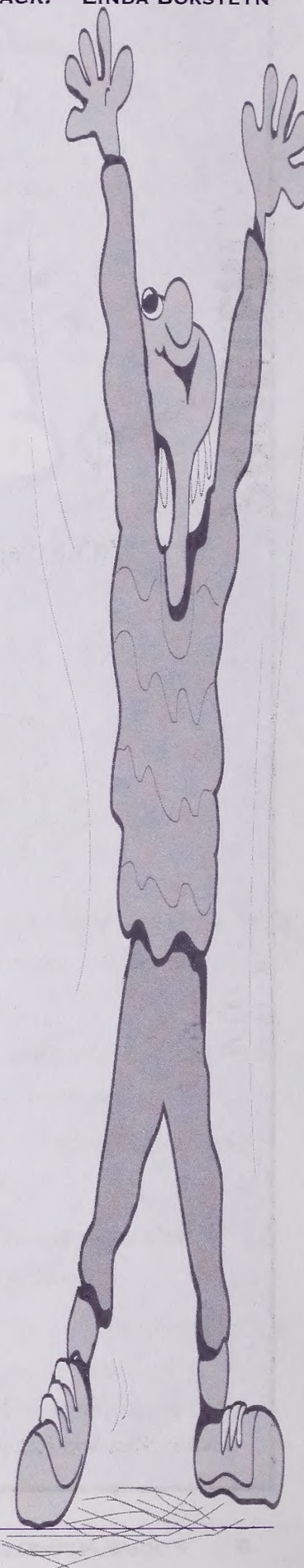


Resiliency Postcard Kits Available

If you are a teacher or facilitator who would like to implement a school-wide resiliency program, AADAC has a kit to help. It includes posters, resiliency postcards, note pads, brochures, articles and a video.

For copies, contact your local AADAC office, or call (780) 422-2794 for general information about the resiliency campaign.

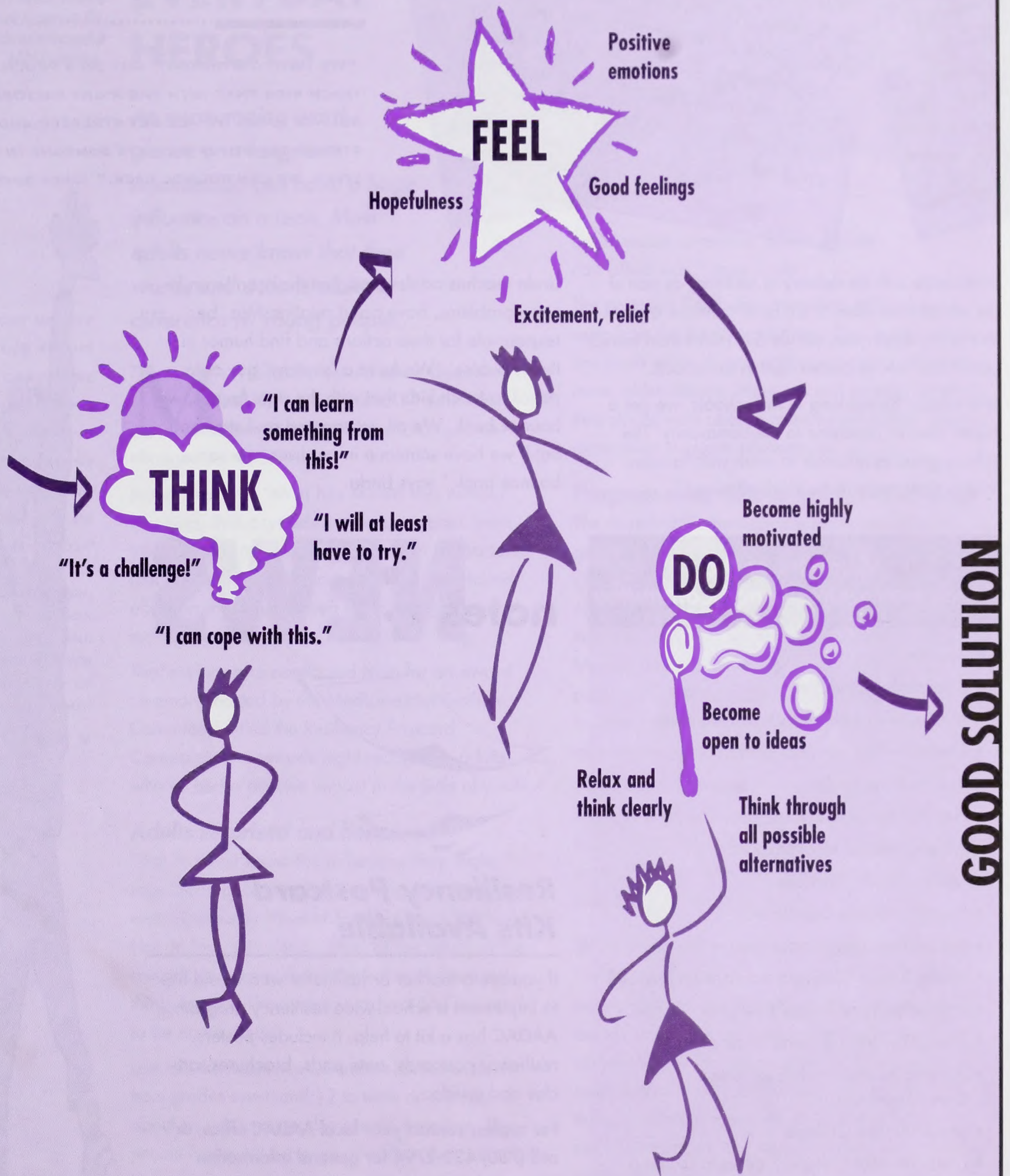
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THINK POSITIVE PROBLEM SOLVER

PROBLEM



Source: "Reaching Today's Youth", National Educational Service, Summer 2000

Calendar of Events:

May 12 to 15, 2002

Vancouver, British Columbia

20th Anniversary of the Report on Violence in the Family: Wife Battering

Symposium on Violence Against Women

This May will mark the 20th anniversary of the tabling of the "Report on Violence in the Family: Wife Battering" in the Canadian House of Commons.

In conjunction with this anniversary, a symposium will be held to celebrate the achievements of violence prevention against women. This symposium is geared for participants from community agencies, government, law enforcement, hospitals and educational institutions. The voices of women who have experienced violence will be heard throughout the conference, both as participants and as presenters.

Contact:

Morgen Baldwin

Tel: (250) 564-5337

e-mail: baldwinmt@home.com

website:

www.bcifv.org/hottopics/events.html

June 2 to 5, 2002

Prince George, British Columbia

Children, Families, Communities Conference
Enhancing Health and Well-being

Contact:

e-mail: cfc-pg@telus.net

website: www.cfcc-pg.ca

August 4 to 7, 2002

Portsmouth, New Hampshire, USA

Victimization of Children and Youth: An International Research Conference

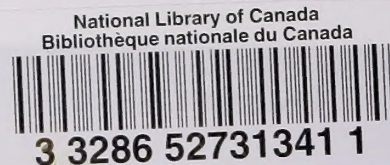
This international conference provides a unique forum to share cutting-edge research on crimes against children. Presenters will address a wide range of aspects of victimization of children including bullying, peer violence, child pornography, date rape and internet victimization.

Contact:

Tel: (603) 862-0767

Fax: (603) 862-1122

e-mail: maverill@cisunix.unh.edu



September 24 to 28, 2002

San Diego, California, USA

7th International Conference on Family Violence

Working Together to End Abuse: Advocacy, Assessment, Intervention, Research, Prevention and Policy

If you are interested in being an exhibitor or presenter for this conference, please contact the Family Violence and Sexual Assault Institute.

Contact:

Family Violence and Sexual Assault Institute

Tel: (858) 623-2777

Fax: (858) 646-0761

e-mail: fvconf@alliant.edu

website: www.fvsai.org

FOCUS

FOCUS newsletter is published by the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence. We welcome your comments, suggestions, and contributions, especially news about events and activities in your community.

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Call toll-free by dialing 310-0000 from anywhere in Alberta. Persons who are deaf or hearing impaired may call (780) 427-9999 in Edmonton, and 1-800-232-7215 outside Edmonton.



FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION

NEWS Community

Domestic Violence Court Turns Two Years Old

In May, 2000, HomeFront, formerly known as the Calgary Justice Working Project, heard its first case in Calgary's Domestic Violence Court. (See Focus, April 2001, for our feature article on the court.)

Since the opening of the Domestic Violence Court, new directions and trends have emerged. These advancements are reflected in the project's new name—HomeFront. A homefront is a safe haven during conflict. HomeFront exists to restore the peace and safety of homes.

Statistics show that out of 3044 people who have appeared in the court since the project began:

- 1515 supervision orders (probation and peace bonds) have been issued.
- 990 persons have enrolled in domestic violence counseling.
- 567 people have received alcohol assessment and treatment.

Debra Tomlinson is the new project director for HomeFront. For more information, visit the website: **homefrontcalgary.com**